



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

April 29, 2005

News Release

MAN SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS FOR AIDING TERRORIST GROUP 19-year-old student pleaded, admitted he planned to travel to Somalia to take money

EL PASO, Texas – College student, Mark Robert Walker, was sentenced Thursday to two years in federal prison after he pleaded to terrorism-related charges, wrapping up an investigation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) National Security Unit special agents assigned to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force here.

The 19-year-old pleaded to Attempting to Make a Contribution of Goods and Services to a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization.

“This case exemplifies the coordination among U.S. Department of Homeland Security agencies in the fight against terrorism,” said Jesus Torres, acting special agent in charge of ICE-El Paso. “By working in concert, we were able to thwart efforts to support a known terrorist organization that posed a threat to our national security.”

In addition to the prison term, United States District Judge David Briones ordered that Walker be placed under supervised release for three years after completing his prison term.

On Nov. 6, 2004, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers detained Walker, a.k.a. Abdullah, a student in Laramie, Wyo., and a resident of Rochester, N.Y., at the Paso Del Norte Bridge as he entered the United States from Mexico. At the time, authorities seized about \$2,200 Walker was carrying as well as a laptop computer, receipts and a journal.

ICE special agents obtained a search warrant for the computer, and retrieved information that confirmed Walker was an administrator for an Islamic website that supported the terrorist group Al-Ittihad Al-Isiami (AIAI). By pleading guilty, Walker admitted that he planned to travel to Somalia to provide financial, material and technical support to help overthrow the current government in Somalia and establish a Somali Islamic government.

Furthermore, he intended to support AIAI: 1) as a soldier; 2) as a purveyor of materials; 3) by providing technical assistance with weapons; 4) by creating and maintaining internet websites for recruitment purposes; and, 5) by providing personal funds as well as helping to raise additional money for a violent jihad.

AIAI is Somalia's largest militant Islamic Organization and rose to power in the early 1990's following the collapse of the Siad Barre regime. AIAI was placed on the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorist Organizations on Sept. 24, 2001, by the President of the United States of America George W. Bush in Executive Order 13224.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.